



Sustain Dane Newsletter

On Economic Development and Sustainability

Ecopreneuring

Living the Triple Bottom Line by Stephanie Resnik

During the Wisconsin Book Festival last month, I went to see Lisa Kivirist and John Ivanko discuss their newest book, *ECOpreneuring: Putting Purpose and the Planet before Profits*. What was perhaps most fascinating about the lecture was that the couple practices what they preach.

Their bed and breakfast, Inn Serendipity, sits on an organic farm in GreenCounty and is powered by 100% renewable energy. They operate under what they call a "new sense of value," based on fair trade, ecological sustainability, and natural interdependencies. Kivirist and Ivanko subscribe to a "honeybee economy," one where we operate on renewable energy, we depend on our neighbors, we are industrious, efficient, yet decentralized, and, most of all, we have fun.

The lecture also outlined the Top Ten ECOpreneur Tips, which range from buying local, rethinking retirement, "failing fast and intelligently," and, to my personal favorite, defining "the good life" on your own terms. To their credit, the tone of the lecture was overwhelmingly optimistic and forward-thinking. This was far from the doom and gloom of the prototypical environmentalist, which can make you want to bury your head in your pillow and sob over the fate of the polar bears. Rather, Kivirist and Ivanko had a sort of contagious enthusiasm for their projects, and I left the lecture feeling inspired, with my head full of my own ECOpreneurial ideas.

